THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • FRIDAY • JULY 28, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 44 • LATE CITY EDITION

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INDIA CROSS AS CHINA ISSUES STAPLED VISAS TO ARUNACHAL SPORTSPERSONS

India calls off visit by 12-member Wushu team to China to compete in a global event after three athletes from Arunachal were issued stapled visas

INDIA RESERVES RIGHT TO RESPOND SUITABLY

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India has lodged its strong protest with China, adding it reserves the right to respond suitably. When a stapled visa is issued, the authorities do not stamp the visa onto the passport. Rather, a paper is attached to the passport, containing details of the trip, which is then stamped by the immigration officer at the destination

COACH CALL TO LET 5 PLAYERS PARTICIPATE

- One of the players from Manipur is an Asian Games medallist. Coach Raghvendra Singh requested the government to allow at least the remaining five players to head to China and participate in the event
- Bagchi said India's long-standing position is that there should be no discrimination in the visa regime for Indians holding valid passports

12-member
WUSHU TEAM WAS TO TAKE PART IN WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES AT CHENGDU

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BACK AFTER 3 DECADES

After over three decades, a Shia Muharram procession being taken out peacefully through the traditional routes of Srinagar on Thursday | ZAHOOR PUNJABI

Amid Parliament logjam, govt passes crucial bills

Oppn MPs to visit Manipur; 1 shot dead, 3 injured in fresh violence

PREETHA NAIR, RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR & PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ New Delhi / Guwahati

A day after moving a no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha against the Narendra Modi government, Opposition parties on Thursday stepped up their protest in Parliament over the Manipur violence, creating a ruckus in the Lok Sabha and disrupting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's speech in the Rajya Sabha.

Although the Lok Sabha witnessed chaos, the Treasury Bench managed to pass two important bills — the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, which seeks to improve the ease of doing business, and the Repealing and Amending Bill aimed at repealing 65 obsolete laws. The Rajya Sabha passed the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Congress Chief Whip in the Lok Sabha Kodikunnil Suresh alleged the government passed the bills without discussion.

The Upper House witnessed a heated exchange between Leader of the House Piyush Goyal and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge after Opposition members disrupted Jaishankar's statement on the country's achievements on the foreign policy front.

Taking a dig at the Opposition members for wearing black dress, Goyal said it reflected their political future. "Your past, present and future is black," Goyal said to the chagrin of Opposition members.

Later, the opposition parties said they would send a 20-member delegation of MPs to Manipur on July 28 and 29 to assess the situation in the state.

On Thursday, one person was killed and three others were injured in a fierce gunfight between two groups in Manipur.

A security official stands guard in Moreh, where a mob set afire 30 houses | PTI

CBI to probe viral video case: MHA

AMIT MUKHERJEE & SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Union home ministry has directed the CBI to probe the brutal sexual assault on two women who were paraded naked by a violent mob in Manipur on May 4. In an affidavit filed before the Supreme Court, the ministry said seven persons have been arrested in connection with the heinous crime, which was video-recorded and circulated on social media. The arrested include the person who recorded the sexual assault on his mobile phone.

In the affidavit, filed in response to the SC's July 20 order asking the Centre and the Manipur government to explain the steps taken to hold the perpetrators accountable, the government sought transfer of the case outside Manipur. The Centre also requested the SC to issue a direction for conclusion of the trial within six months of the CBI filing the chargesheet.

PROTOCOL BREACH

AirAsia stops Guv from boarding flight

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

IN what could be termed an unprecedented protocol violation, an AirAsia India flight took off from Terminal 2 of the Kempegowda International Airport to Hyderabad on Thursday afternoon after refusing to allow Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot on board, according to sources.

A source familiar with the development said the airline staff felt the governor was too late to be permitted inside the aircraft, while multiple sources denied any delay on his part. Gehlot left for Hyderabad by another AirAsia India flight after 90 minutes.

AirAsia India flight I5972 that took off without the governor was to reach Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at 2.05 pm.

A source told *TNIE*, "VVIPs like the President, Prime Minister, Union Home Minister, chief ministers and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court have special access to a 'ceremonial lounge', which is away from public view. The protocol to be followed in the case of the governor is that he will not be subjected to any frisking. A vehicle takes the governor directly from the 'ceremonial lounge' to the tarmac where the aircraft is ready for take-off and he does not have to go through the regular boarding gate which shuts half an hour before departure. Moreover, after the boarding of all passengers is completed, the governor's protocol team is alerted. Then the governor arrives and is the last passenger to board the flight." There is no question of the governor being late as he is expected to board last, he said.

An airport source said when the governor reached the flight, the aircraft door was not shut. Another source confirmed that the door was not closed. "The governor should have been allowed on board and this is a protocol violation," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P2

Mekedatu: K'taka to start survey soon

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

THE state government, which is keen on implementing its ambitious Mekedatu balancing reservoir project across the Cauvery, will soon conduct a survey to fix Karnataka's boundaries and take a count of trees in the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.

The project aims at easing the drinking water shortage, generating hydel power and storing surplus water to meet the needs of Tamil Nadu. The government has deputed 29 deputy range forest officers from its wildlife sanctuaries to conduct the survey.

The Tamil Nadu government has strongly objected to the project stating that it would violate the decisions of the Supreme Court and the Cauvery Tribunal. It also stated that Karnataka has no right to construct a barrage across the Cauvery. However, the state government wants to complete the survey and assessment of ecological losses at the earliest. The project is expected to submerge more than 4,000 acres of land. However, incessant rain in the region and release of water from KRS and Kabini reservoirs are delaying these preliminary works.

Karnataka has submitted a detailed project report to the Centre and has sought environmental clearance.

Meanwhile, Shivakumar, a resident of Hegannur near Mekedatu, said he will lose 10 acres of land for the project. Around 400 acres have been marked at Madiwala village. Sangama and Thandya colony will be submerged. Stating that the government has promised to give alternative land, he demanded that the land losers also be given cash compensation as they would have to start farming afresh.

Malathi Priya, Chief Conservator of Forests, Mysore Division, said 12 of the 29 officers deputed for the survey have reported to her.

Panel to collect ₹6K cr from errant quarry owners soon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state cabinet on Thursday decided to constitute a cabinet sub-committee to collect Rs 6,105 crore by imposing penalty on stone quarries owners who violated norms, besides collecting the royalty fee which they evaded for several years.

The cabinet also decided to constitute Karnataka State Road Regulatory and Development Authority (KSRRDA) under the chief minister to mobilise funds by implementing projects under Public Private Partnership (PPP).

HK Patil

Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said that the Industries and Commerce Department's cumulative audit revealed the royalty fee evasion by stone quarry owners and also encroachments of quarry areas by them. "It will be a one-time settlement (OTS) for errant quarry owners. Penalties levied have not been recovered for eight years. This is expected to fetch more revenue to the government and the CM has been authorised to constitute the cabinet sub-committee to frame modalities," he said.

This move is seen as an apparent attempt to augment funds for the smooth implementation of five guarantees promised by the state government. On the formation of KSRRDA under CM's chairmanship under PWD, he said road projects will be implemented on priority, especially at industrial corridors, by attracting investments from private parties under the PPP model. P4

EXPRESS READ

Citing 'red diary', PM Modi says BJP will defeat Congress in Raj Assembly polls

SIKAR (RAJASTHAN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hit out at the Rajasthan government, invoking sacked minister Rajendra Gudha's "red diary" and said the "dark deeds" recorded in it will lead to the Congress' defeat in the Assembly elections. Addressing a public rally here, the prime minister said the "red diary" is a fresh product of the Congress' "loot ki dukan". "It is said that the 'dark deeds' of the Congress are recorded in the diary, which will defeat the party in elections in the state," he added | P9

Apex court extends ED director's tenure till September 15 in 'national interest'

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday extended the tenure of ED Director Sanjay Kumar Mishra till September 15 midnight in larger "public and national interest" after the Centre asserted his continuity is necessary in view of the FATF peer review and attempts by India's neighbours to ensure the country falls in the grey list. The SC accepted the Centre's request for extending tenure, but for a period that is a month less than what it had sought | P10

WITH THIS ISSUE — CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE — 44 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Camera trapped: State home to 435 tigers

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE tiger estimation report released by the Karnataka Forest Department on Thursday shows a rise in tiger numbers assessed through the camera trap method.

However, the actual numbers will be known on Saturday (World Tiger Day) when the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) release the all-India tiger census report.

As per the department's report, the number of tigers counted through camera traps in 2018 was 404, which has now increased to 435. The Nagarahole Tiger Reserve reported the highest number of 149 tigers, followed by Bandipur Tiger Reserve (143). However, there has been a reduction in tiger numbers in BRT Tiger Reserve and MM Hills (A proposal to declare them as the sixth tiger reserve is pending before the state government). The Kali Tiger Reserve reported 19 tigers in 2023 compared to four in 2018.

The report shows that the number of camera trap images increased from 49,79,803 in 2018 to 66,86,450 in 2023. The number of camera trap locations also increased from 4,123 to 4,786 from 2018 to 2023, respectively.

CONTINUED ON: P7

ELEPHANT CENSUS

The elephant census report of southern states will be out in 10 days. It is being prepared by forest officials of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, AP, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra along with IISc.

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